



State of California

Respiratory Care Board

444 North 3rd Street, Suite 270

Sacramento, CA 95814

Telephone: (916) 323-9983 or Toll free (866) 375-0386

Fax: (916) 323-9999

Email: rcbinfo@dca.ca.gov

Web: www.rcb.ca.gov



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Inquiry: Please provide clarification concerning a Respiratory Therapist's ability to carry and supply medications, in the home care industry, to a patient with a verbal request from a physician.

Example: A physician orders a nebulizer and respiratory medications for a patient. The physician would like a Respiratory Therapist to set up the equipment in the patient's home and deliver the medications.

I know that in an acute setting, Respiratory Therapists are allowed to carry and provide medications with a request from a physician

Response: The Board agrees that a Licensed Respiratory Therapist can set up the equipment in the patient's home and administer pharmacological agents based upon a physician's order. This is clearly within the scope of practice as outlined in section 3701 and 3702 of the Practice Act.

What is not defined or regulated under the Practice Act is your inquiry regarding the dispensing of medications. The Pharmacy Board of California, the Department of Health Services of California and the Joint Commission (JCAHO) regulate that function in the home care and acute care setting. Their contact information is included for your reference.

The Board's current understanding of the regulation is that the therapist could carry and deliver the medication to the patient as long as it was dispensed by a pharmacist and clearly labeled with the patient's information. However, since this clarification is not part of the Practice Act we would strongly encourage you to clarify that understanding with one of the referenced governing authorities.

Thank you for your inquiry. Should you need additional information please do not hesitate to contact the Executive Officer of the Respiratory Care Board.

Department of Health Services

714/ 744 P Street,

Sacramento CA, 95814

(916) 445-4171

Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations (JCAHO)

One Renaissance Blvd.
Oakbrook Terrace, IL 60181
Phone: (630) 792-5000
Fax: (630) 792-5005

California Board of Pharmacy

400 R Street, Suite 4070
Sacramento, CA 95814
Phone: (916) 445-5014
Fax: (916) 327-6308

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